

# Editorial

One feature of the legal scene since the war, and more particularly in more recent years, has been the proliferation of legal journals. Accordingly the editor of a new journal may well be expected to provide some special reason to justify yet another periodical, and to explain in what way it seeks to fill in a gap in the literature. Some indication, indeed, appears from the very name of our journal. Unusual as it is for a legal journal to adopt the name of a judge it is thought to be unprecedented for one to adopt the name of a living judge. But Lord Denning, of course, is unique. He is fond of quoting Shakespeare, and we could all appropriately quote it back at him:

“He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.”  
(Hamlet: Act I, Scene 2)

The original idea was that without being in the normal sense a specialist publication, the *Denning Law Journal* should not be entirely generalist but should relate to the enormous impact that Lord Denning has had, directly or indirectly, upon the development of the law during a period that covers all or virtually all of the professional careers of most of those currently engaged in the law, whether as judges, practitioners or academics. It was, of course, absolutely crucial to the project as conceived that it should have the approval of Lord Denning, who had previously shown his interest in Buckingham by giving his name to, and opening, the Denning Law Library. We count ourselves extremely fortunate in the support we have received from Lord Denning, particularly in his willingness to become the Patron of the *Journal* which has the privilege of bearing his name. We have been equally fortunate in persuading Lord Scarman to become chairman of the Editorial Advisory Board, and in obtaining the ready agreement of the other distinguished lawyers whose names appear on the title page to give their assistance by joining the Board. Their guidance will help the Editors and the Editorial Committee in their efforts to ensure that so far as possible the contents of the *Journal* are worthy of the name it bears.

The policy of the *Journal* is to publish scholarly articles upon matters which relate to the central themes of Lord Denning's life, work, philosophy and vision.

These themes include:

- i) the importance of developing the common law;
- ii) the need for judicial and community recognition of the importance and urgency of reform and modernisation of law;
- iii) the importance of preserving the traditions of judicial independence, integrity and creativity;
- iv) the importance of reflecting upon the interplay between law and morality; and
- v) the essential role to be played by the law in the defence of the individual in the modern state.

This first issue, dedicated to Lord Denning, is somewhat different in two respects from the style and content we envisage for future issues. First, the emphasis is much more directly and personally concerned with Lord Denning's life and work and his own contribution to the law than is expected to be the norm in later issues. Secondly, we have taken a deliberate decision to include some material particularly relevant in the light of the emphasis referred to, even though it has previously been published elsewhere. We have done this in cases where we judged that it might well not have come to the attention of many of our readers, and where it was particularly appropriate to this inaugural issue. Included in this category is an autobiographical piece by Lord Denning himself.

Needless to say, contributors may or may not agree with Lord Denning's views on the issues they discuss. No stranger to controversy and a believer in the cut and thrust of argument as a way towards achieving the right result, Lord Denning is, we believe, the last person who would wish to see a conformist approach. We look forward to publishing a wide range of views which will, we hope and believe, be of interest to all those interested in the development and future of the common law, and be a step towards what should be, in Lord Denning's words, the common goal of lawyers, namely the "pursuit of truth and justice".

In conclusion it is only right, and I would wish, to give due credit to Mr Clifford Hall, the Staff Editor of the Journal, who originated the idea which has led to the publication of this first issue. His enthusiasm ensured that the project went forward despite various difficulties that arose during its period of gestation. I would also like to acknowledge the help and encouragement that have been given by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham, Dr Michael Barrett, whose support has led the University to take formal responsibility for the venture: it is a happy chance that the first issue appears in the tenth anniversary year of the founding of the University.

PHP